

AMENDMENT

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method for automatically managing energy cost using metering data and pricing data, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving metering data from a utility meter, wherein the metering data is electronically transmitted from the utility meter;

receiving pricing data electronically over a network, wherein the pricing data is associated with a plurality of sources of power;

forecasting a forecast load based on the received metering data from the utility meter, wherein said forecasting includes the steps of creating a current load shape from said metering data, and comparing the current load shape to a load shape from a prior time period based on historical data;

determining an optimal consumption decision based on the received pricing data and the forecast load, wherein the consumption decision selects one of the plurality of sources of power to thereby reduce utility costs, and wherein said optimal consumption decision is calculated using an optimal cost curve derived from an optimization algorithm applied to the pricing data and the forecast load;

determining a price baseline for a combination of ~~one or more~~ **the plurality** of the sources of power, wherein the price baseline is determined by price point data for the ~~one or more~~ **plurality of** sources of power, the forecast load and a percentage of the forecast load which will be met by each of the ~~one or more~~ **plurality of** sources of power; and

delivering the optimal consumption decision to the customer via the network.

2. (Canceled).

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the utility meter comprises an electric meter.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the utility meter comprises a gas meter.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the utility meter comprises a water meter.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the metering data is electronically transmitted from the utility meter via a telephone line.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the pricing data includes grid price point data, distributed generation price point data, demand-side management price point data and alternative fuel price point data.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the network is the Internet.
9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising determining a price baseline for at least one of the plurality of the sources of power, as a function of the forecast load and of price point data for the at least one of the plurality of sources of power.
10. (Canceled).
11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the forecasting step further comprises receiving weather data and forecasting a forecast load based on the received metering data from the utility meter and the weather data.
12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the determining step further comprises receiving financial market data and determining an optimal consumption decision based on the received pricing data, the forecast load and the financial market data.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the additional forecasting data is received via the Internet.
14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the optimal consumption decision is further based, in part, on the additional forecasting data.
15. (Canceled).
16. (Canceled).
17. (Canceled).
18. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including allowing the customer to choose to receive power from one or more of the plurality of sources of power.
19. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including electronically delivering a bill for power from one or more utilities to the customer.
20. (Original) The method of claim 19, further including allowing the customer to pay the bill electronically.
21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further including automatically implementing the optimal consumption decision, wherein the automatically implementing includes automatically providing power from at least one of the plurality of sources of power to the customer based upon the optimal consumption decision.
22. (Canceled).

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Title: METHODS AND APPARATUS FOR A UTILITY PROCESSING SYSTEM

23. (Canceled).

24. (Canceled).

25. (Canceled).

26. (Canceled).

27. (Canceled).

28. (Canceled).

29. (Canceled).

30. (Canceled).

31. (Canceled).

32. (Canceled).

33. (Canceled).

34. (Canceled).

35. (Canceled).

36. (Canceled).

37. (Canceled).

38. (Canceled).

39. (Canceled).

40. (Canceled).

41. (Canceled).

42. (Canceled).

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of implementing a feedback system for optimally meeting an actual load when the actual load deviates from the forecasted load.

44. (Currently Amended) A system for managing energy cost, comprising:
a server communicating with at least one utility meter, wherein said server is configured to record metering data received from said utility meter via a network, forecast a forecast load based on the received metering data from the utility meter, create a current load shape from said metering data, and compare the current load shape to a load shape from a prior time period based on historical data;

wherein the server is further configured to receive ~~receives~~ pricing data from ~~each~~ of a plurality of sources of power ~~power sources~~ from the network, determine an optimal consumption decision, and determine a price baseline for a combination of the plurality of sources of power from price point data of ~~each~~ the plurality of sources of power ~~power source~~ received over the network, the forecast load and a percentage of the forecast load which will be met by each of the plurality of sources of power; and

wherein the server is further configured to deliver the optimal consumption decision to a customer over the network.

45. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the at least one utility meter comprises an electric meter.

46. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the at least one utility meter comprises a gas meter.
47. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the at least one utility meter comprises a water meter.
48. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the metering data is electronically transmitted from the utility meter via a telephone line.
49. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the pricing data includes grid price point data, distributed generation price point data, demand-side management price point data and alternative fuel price point data.
50. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the server comprises at least one central server communicatively linked to at least one regional server.
51. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~49~~ 50, wherein the at least one central server is configured to receive the pricing data from the network, receive the metering data from the at least one regional server, determine the optimal consumption decision and transmit the optimal consumption decision to the at least one regional server.
52. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~49~~ 50, wherein the at least one regional server is configured to receive the metering data from the at least one utility meter, transmit the metering data to the at least one central server, receive the optimal consumption decision from the at least one central server and transmit the optimal consumption decision to the customer.
53. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the network

comprises the Internet.

54. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the network comprises a wide area network.
55. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, further including allowing the customer to choose to receive power from one or more of the plurality of sources of power.
56. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the forecast of a forecast load further comprises receiving additional forecasting data, such as weather data and forecasting a forecast load based on the received metering data from the utility meter and the weather data.
57. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the optimal consumption determination further comprises receiving financial market data and determining an optimal consumption decision based on the received pricing data, the forecast load and the financial market data.
58. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, further including automatically implementing the optimal consumption decision, wherein the automatically implementing includes automatically providing power from at least one of the plurality of sources of power to the customer based upon the optimal consumption decision.
59. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, further including electronically delivering a bill for power from one or more utilities to the customer.
60. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 59, further including allowing the customer to pay the bill electronically.

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61. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, further comprising a feedback system that is implemented for optimally meeting an actual load when the actual load deviates from the forecasted load.